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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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FROM : Amlegation, Helsinki

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

REF : Despatch No. 25 dated July 19, 1954

18 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	REC'D	OTHER
	EUR-5	CC/R-2, 04-6 E-PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS
	7/23	CIA-5, ARMY-3, NAVY-3, AIR-3

SUBJECT: Press and other comment regarding the Kekkonen-Molotov declaration of July 17, 1954

Subsequent to the preparation of the Legation's despatch No. 25 of July 19 on the subject "Finland announces willingness to accept ambassadors, etc." the following additional press and organizational comment on the declaration regarding peace and the exchange of ambassadors which was issued in Moscow on July 17 by Foreign Ministers Kekkonen of Finland and Molotov of the USSR has come to the Legation's attention.

"Ilta Sanomat" published on July 19 a brief editorial on the Kekkonen-Molotov statement, part of which read as follows:

"This time, surprisingly enough, a political declaration drafted jointly by Messrs. Molotov and Kekkonen is associated with the trade agreement. Certainly trade ought to be kept quite separate from politics. In practice, however, this has not always been the case. The trade policy of the Soviet Union in particular is closely bound up with its foreign policy. and yet it is novel that trade and politics should be yoked together in such demonstrative fashion as has now been the case in Moscow. Presumably nobody would have anything to object against those sentiments set forth in the statement. The fact that they are destined to support Soviet policy in the present international situation, and that Finland, which hitherto has persistently stood aside from the affairs of the great powers, has now put its oar in, is indeed another matter. As a result of this proclamation our international position will come to be re-assessed, and it is to be feared that the west will come to conclusions with regard thereto which will be disadvantageous to us.

"Finland has, however, good reason to hold fast to the principle set forth in the treaty of friendship and mutual aid, to the effect that it wishes to remain aside from international controversies. We should conduct our relations with an even hand in all directions. Now, with

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"respect to one direction, we have gone a couple of steps too far. If we want to go on giving the impression abroad that we are equal partners in negotiation, wouldn't this be a good moment to associate ourselves whole-heartedly with the Council of the Northern Countries? There ought not to be anything a bit more ticklish about that step than in the most recent moves of our government."

"Nya Pressen" defends the actual statement but laments the way in which it was publicized in apparently intimate conjunction with the signing of the trade agreement; the paper tries to persuade its readers to judge the statement solely on its own merits. This passage is very interesting. The editor of "Nya Pressen," Axel Grönvik, does not admire Prime Minister Kekkonen and is presumably happy enough to assert that Kekkonen has bungled the handling of a step which in itself appears innocuous to Grönvik. On the other hand, Grönvik is close to President Paasikivi, being the person who brings into final form the excellent texts of the public statements made by the President from time to time in the Swedish language. It is understood that on Kekkonen's hurried visit to Helsinki around July 10 he discussed the matter of this statement with the President and with the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Cabinet (but not with the whole Cabinet), and presumably received their approval of the step in substance. It is tempting to suppose that Grönvik's editorial may reflect dissatisfaction on the part of the President himself with the way in which the release of the statement was timed. Pertinent portions of the editorial read as follows:

"For our part we find it difficult to understand Helsingin Sanomat's concern. The brief declaration is drafted in such general terms that one must have a very lively imagination if one seeks to take it as an intervention in the field of world policy. When our colleague is furthermore vexed that Finland--not itself a member of the United Nations--invokes the principles of that organization, he forgets that the passage is quoted from the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance.

"Nor can one believe that our Foreign Ministry has the intention to associate general political declarations with trade treaties for the future, as Uusi Suomi puts it. According to what we learn, the trade agreement was signed in the afternoon, and the statement was drawn up on a later occasion, during the Saturday evening banquet. To be sure it is difficult to follow the chronological nuances from as far away as Helsinki, but there is every reason to insist upon them. We must look away from what we do not scruple to call the unfortunate circumstances which coupled the commercial agreement with the political

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"declaration. We are by no means agreed that concrete trade pacts may be associated with general political statements. And the present political declaration is to be taken in isolation and as it stands, in its content and spirit a reinforcement and repetition of the assurances contained in the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance. There is and can be no question of intervention in the field of international policy."

"Suomen Sosialidemokraatti" closed its fairly long editorial for July 20, for the most part given over to analysis of the provisions of the trade agreement, with the following brief passage which is fairly sharp coming from the other of the two major parties, besides Kekkonen's Agrarians, which are represented in the Cabinet:

"Unfortunately the favorable impression created by the agreement is damaged by the alien and gratuitous political overtones to it."

"Työkansan Sanomat," also on July 20, calls the developments a "triumph of the forces of peace," and with respect to the trade agreement notes that at the signing ceremony "even so zealous an opponent of the extension of trade interchange between our two countries as Party Secretary Väinö Leskinen" was present. (Actually Leskinen was in Moscow on business of the worker's athletic association TUL, of which he is chairman; as Minister of the Interior in the cabinet of which Kekkonen is Foreign Minister, he would find it difficult to avoid attending a Finnish state function of this character.) With regard to the Kekkonen-Molotov political statement, "Työkansan Sanomat" rejoices that bourgeois and pro-American papers have criticized it; this circumstance proves, in the paper's eyes, that the statement must be desirable.

The Central Committee of the Finnish Communist Party issued a declaration welcoming the Kekkonen-Molotov statement and expressed its view that "steps must be taken to bring about among the democratic forces representing the various sectors of our country's population a broad cooperative effort on behalf of a European collective security system, which would constitute the safest assurance for Finland's peace as well as for that of other countries."

For the Minister:

H. Bartlett Wells

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First Secretary

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